Northern Essex Community College

NECC Observer

Britney's back. Again.

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March 30, 2011 The Student Newspaper of Northern Essex Community College, Haverhill and Lawrence, Mass. • Vol. 72, No. 13

Off to a swinging start

By Hope M. Hunt
Copy Editor

NECC's baseball team traveled nine hours to Maryland to play a series of exhibition games versus some Division I and Division II teams, as well as a nationally-ranked Division III team.

Our valiant Knights went 3-5 against some top-notch competition, a relatively impressive beginning to their 2011 season.

Although none of their wins or losses in Maryland will count towards their overall record the team had the rare opportunity to preview their talent as well as prepare for what lay ahead. Our Knights seek redemption from their previous 7-23 bummer of a season, but will they have what it takes?

If our Knights' pre-season performance in Maryland is any indicator of how well they will perform this season, it would be safe to assume that they will outperform last season's record with ease.

Last season the team experienced hardships-- their roster lacked depth and some of their key players sustained injuries, but this season is already looking up, as demonstrated in Maryland, as they rose to the occasion facing-off against some pretty fierce competitors from top schools.

Returning to the Knights' roster from last season are pitchers Anyelo Roman and Mike Chartier, catcher Paul Becotte, and shortstop Ray Roman.

These veterans face the tall order of rebounding from their previous season's disappointing conclusion, which is neither impossible nor improbable.

This season's roster also features some notable freshman talent in addition to its returning talent as the Knights welcome 15 newcomers to the roster.

March 23 the Knights were scheduled to face-off against Dean College, but the game was cancelled due to inclement weather.

Friday afternoon, however, the sun was shining and the team took to the quad to catch some fly balls and prepare for their double-header versus UConn Avery Point Saturday March 26, which didn't go so well.

Hope M. Hunt Photo

The NECC baseball team practicing on the quad for their upcoming games.

The Knights lost the first game (11-0) as well as the second game (5-3).

Despite their losses against UConn Avery Point it would not be farfetched to anticipate that our Knights will still outperform their last season.

However, now, the Knights have little room for error, as they need to win the remainder of their conference games to place in a higher seed when playoffs roll around.

Class policy discussed

By Thomas Shamma
Asst. Opinion Editor

Lane Glenn, the incoming president of the college, offered his position and clarifications on the proposed enrollment policy, which, if instated, would require students to enroll at least two weeks prior to the scheduled first day of classes.

The first thing he emphasized on the topic was that the proposal has not yet been accepted. "It's being discussed," he said. "[It's] a proposal that's being floated around right now for faculty to respond to."

"The idea behind it is decades of research on student success," he explained. "The later a student registers for classes the less likely they are to succeed … Students who enroll after classes start would most likely not succeed."

Continued on Page 5

Students petition to hire professor

By Chantal McGovern
Executive Editor

Currently, there is a dispute occurring between the administration of NECC and the students of Math Professor Justin Chase.

Chase, an adjunct professor, who is extremely well like by his students ,will be leaving NECC unless he is hired as an full-time professor at the college.

Several of Chase's students are coming together in an attempt to get him a full-time position at the college.

Student Victoria Czaia is the leading force behind the campaign to hire Chase. Czaia originally had Chase for a developmental math course.

Later, Czaia had to take College Algebra, however she says that the professor she had wasn't helpful.

Thus, she retook College Algebra again and says she also couldn't understand with that professor either.

"This is more than getting Justin hired, it's about getting the Math department cleaned up once and for all," said Czaia. "I tend to take action when ignored like I have been by David Hartleb, Lane Glenn, and others in upper management. I do have Channel 7 and 9 along with the Eagle Tribune on speed dial if the occasion arises. If putting my face on TV makes them answer me then so be it."

Czaia now is taking College Algebra again with Chase and plans on taking more math classes with him in the future.

"In the classroom he is attentive to every student and is known to pick students out that sometimes look puzzled about a math equation and makes sure they understand before going on to the next problem.

"I have been one of those students. It is because he leaves no student behind and makes one feel that there education is important that I have decided (should Professor Chase get hired)." Czaia said. "I will take my math career much higher than what is necessary straight up to Calculus II."

Another student of Chase, Colby Curd has started taking math classes with Chase this semester.

"I have taken his class for the first time this year and I have never enjoyed math more than I have in his class in all of my education career" Curd says. "I am very interested in taking his class next year and really hope that the efforts of the students pay off."

As a way of getting support the students of Chase have created a Facebook group titled "Justin Chase For Full-Time Position".

As of March 28 the group had a total of 47 members and his entire Basic Algebra signed a petition to get Chase on faculty full-time. Students have also written letters to NECC President David Hartleb to express their concern.

"He doesn't have the "learn it on your own" attitude. He truly cares about his students and that is something I personally haven't seen in years," says Czaia. "His belief in 'no student left behind' is just one more of many reasons he should be hired."

Chase has taught for three different departments at the college, which includes developmental math, math and computer sciences. During this semester, according to the credit course catalogue he is teaching five math courses.

"He has been an terrific contributor to all these departments," said Stephen Proietti, the coordinator of the math department.

"Justin Chase has been very cutting edge…he is adjusting all the time for his audience."

Proietti went on to say that Chase is a great part of the math department.

"This unsolicited effort from our students highlights more of our students' collaborative abilities and determination than it possibly does me and my teaching," says Chase.

Chantal McGovern Photo

Victoria Czaia and Amy Rufo, both students of Professor Justin Chase, are rallying support.

"I am fortunate to teach here at NECC and I love every minute of it. What I'm most excited about is watching students join together for a cause, because truly that's what the world is about in 2011," said Chase.

"Right now there is not an open position to even consider, but if there ever is I would most certainly apply. After that, I would have full faith in the selection committee and I would fully respect whatever decision is made."

Another student of Chase, Steven Brown is involved in the effort to get him hired.

"No joke NECC should be jumping at the chance to hire him because he's that great/enthusiastic/knowledgeable/caring."

Editorial

Let vigor push us to the end

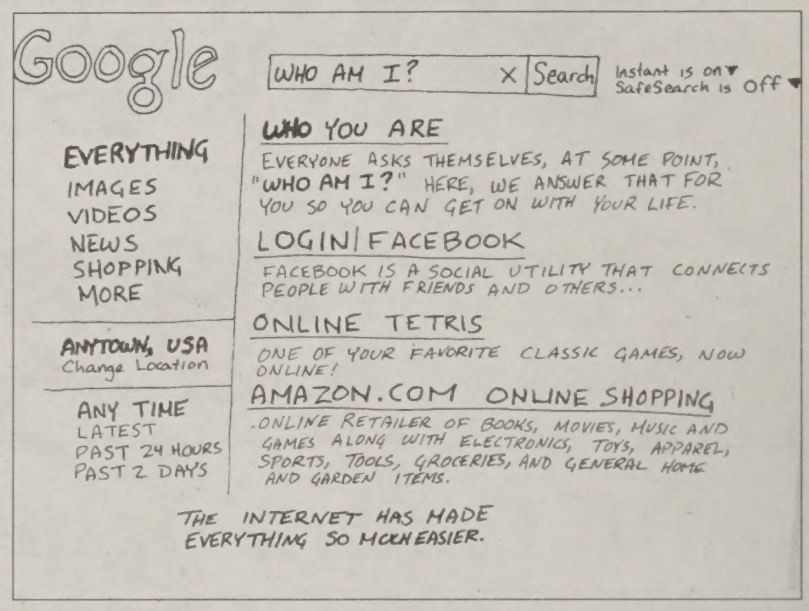
For the first time in what seems like an eternity, students walked across campus on actual grass. The ice and snow, although not a distant memory quite yet, has been conquered. Thank goodness for "The Office" reruns, cell phones, and Facebook. Everything was colorless and appeared dead, which in turn, made all of us colorless and dead. But now it is a new time.

Even though we are rejoicing in the coming of spring, we can't forget the struggles of other nations and our own; Japan suffering a record breaking earthquake, tsunami, and battling a nuclear crisis, the Libyan Revolution, and of course the continuing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the grand scale, it seems that we can do little for the people in need, but in our own small ways, everyday, we can keep the torch that was passed on to "a new generation of Americans," burning brighter than ever. Continue working, continue giving, continue moving forward.

NECC is a school where things are constantly in motion, which can be noticed by the vigor of many clubs and activities that frequent the campus.

We continue to thrive on our ability to connect and network with people that will help us on our career paths and in our lives. We are a school of commuters. A school that knows the hardships of balancing work, studies, and family.

This is the final stretch to the finish line of another semester. All-nighters and times of frustration are ahead, unless you are somehow different from 99 percent of the college students. Either way, good luck.



Observer Staff Cartoon

NECC Observer

The award-winning student newspaper of Northern Essex Community College

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How to submit a letter to the Observer

The Observer welcomes letters from our readers. Letters for publication may be submitted via email, mail or by dropping off the letter at the newsroom, located in Rm. C-222 in the Spurk building.

All letters must be signed and also include a phone number for verification. Email submissions should include Letter to Editor in the subject line or risk not being received by the Observer email system.

We prefer submissions via email:
observer@necc.mass.edu
*Include Letter to Editor in the subject line.

But, if you wish to submit a letter via paper:
Letter to Editor, NECC Observer, 100 Elliot St., Haverhill, MA 01830

While we attempt to publish all letters, we reserve the right to edit or reject those received.

The NECC Observer is a member of the Associated Collegiate Press, College Media Advisers Inc., the Columbia Scholastic Press Association, and the New England Press Association.

Roaming Reporter

Have you ever attended a NECC sporting event or theater production?

Patrice Darby
Business Transfer
"I haven't."

Shane Foley
Journalism
"Does the talent show count?"

Photos/Interviews by Rick Ingham & Hope Hunt

Emily Henderson
Philosophy
"I haven't been to a sporting event and the play usually doesn't line up with my work schedule."

Courtney Beverage
Radiology
"No."

Opinion

NECC website causes headaches

NECC's website shows that form does not equal function

By Rick Ingham
Opinion Editor

Last semester my friend, colleague, and copy editor for The Observer, Hope Hunt, wrote a scathing review of the art hanging in and around the Haverhill campus. Her article sparked a movement that brought new posters to the second floor of the C-building and caused the formation of a committee to overhaul the look and feel of the campus for those who visit. It is in that spirit that I present my distaste for NECC's website and its layout.

Aesthetically there's nothing wrong with the website. It looks clean and professional and really represents the school as a legitimate place of higher learning. I examined several other websites for schools in our area and found that the NECC website can hold its own against the likes of UNH, Salem State, and even Northeastern and Harvard. Sadly I have to say that UMass has NECC beat with subtle nuances and a style that conveys a rich campus life and reverence for the region.

Of course, aesthetics don't equal efficiency. In fact as a fun little experiment look up the definition of aesthetics online and then search the page for the word "efficient." I haven't found a definition that satisfies that idea yet, let me know if you do. Something can look beautiful and regal and under the hood be total and complete garbage. Like a 1958 Chevrolet Corvette on display in a cheap classic car showroom. The lines and details are amazing, but under the shiny exterior is a hollowed out cavern where a mighty engine should be. Forgive me if there is anyone reading this that owns a classic car showroom, I'm sure yours is very nice.

The NECC website has a slick exterior with a polished coat of paint and is a pleasure to look at. However, take a step off of the main page and the gorgeous mansion is revealed to be a Hollywood back lot façade. For all of its aesthetic beauty the website is a jumbled mess to deal with. Finding even the simplest shred of information is a battle of wits where getting lost is far too easy.

Let's say you have to find the e-mail address for your professor because you don't have your class syllabus on hand. Beginning on the main page of the NECC website you think the search bar at the top corner would be a good place to start, and you would be wrong. A simple name search produces a results page that looks like a bile-soaked heap of vomited information that requires sifting. Depending on how much your professor does on campus and whether you are able to correctly spell their name you could be met with several pages to wade through in your quest for simple information.

Choosing the "My NECC" link brings the user to lists of links and pathways to follow. It is a jumbled arrangement that does not appear to follow any sorting methods. Finally stumbling upon "self-service" in the middle of the last column of options (assuming you read left to right) you are whisked away to the sign in page where the heading banner encourages you to "Think Opportunity," at this point I wonder if they refer to the opportunity to use a website that isn't so compartmentalized and labyrinthine.

One of the most common tasks that I see is retrieving the current semester's schedule. Often when people come to the computer lab without a student ID, the easiest alternative is bringing up their schedule on a monitor to the right of the entryway. However because of the needlessly complex layout of the school's website I see many people floundering between pages, endlessly clicking one link after another failing to find what they are looking for. At the risk of sounding cliché, I wish I had a dollar for each time I saw this happen.

photo by Rick Ingham

necc.mass.edu may be a polished and professional representation of the college, but the difficulty in navigating its many pages detract from the convenience

Allow me to chronicle the journey from sign in page to class schedule for those unfamiliar with the process. After signing in to self-service I click on "Student Records and Registration" thinking that I will find my records and registration status. This leads to the "Student Services" tab, which is odd because I was given the option to pick the tab before and opted for something else, so right out of the gate we have redundant links and pathways.

Finding myself mysteriously on the "Student Services" page, I click on "Student Records" link assuming that I will be able to find my schedule, because all I really want is to find my weekly schedule. However, as I look at the "Student Records" page there is a clear lack of anything mentioning a record of my schedule.

It turns out that I took a wrong turn at the "Student Services" page. Obviously my task is a common one, so instead of opting for the option to peer into my records, I should have gone for the link labeled: "Common Student Tasks." Following this link I find myself face to face with over 20 blue-tinted options, which lead in every which way. However this seems to be where my journey will come to an end as I spy the seventh option of the left side column. It simply reads "View/Print My Class Schedule," a glorious sight. My relief turns to confusion, however, as I am met with a drop down menu where the first option says Fall Term 2011. I stop for a moment and have to think. It's not fall semester, fall semester is over six months away. In order to show my current schedule I have to select it from the drop down menu. Why give the option in the first place?

This drawn out and convoluted process happens several times a day in the computer lab and many more times online as users access the school's main website and self service. Is it really so hard to streamline a school's website? Why should simple processes be needlessly complicated?

Perhaps it is time for a young and ambitious website aficionado to step forward and rescue the rest of us from the dark depths of the online labyrinth. Will a brave Theseus ever come to lead us out into the light? One can only hope.

In the mean time we can always resort to clicking one link after another until luck delivers up the desired information. If all else fails, I suggest staring at the screen. Sure it has never worked in a practical sense, but maybe you can get a tan from the monitor's pale glow.

Cut budget, not peace keepers

2011 US Budget favors NASCAR, not peace training

By Thomas Shamma
Assistant Opinion Editor

You probably haven't heard of the United States Institute of Peace. They tend to keep a pretty low profile -- as they say on their website,

"The Institute's work is not always visible because it seeks to protect the people it works with in conflict zones. The work is more important than the publicity," they write.

The USIP is a major U.S. diplomatic force for human rights, diplomacy, conflict prevention and education in our foreign policy, and they frequently work closely with the military to resolve conflicts gracefully and save lives by finding solutions that don't involve bloodshed.

In the 2011 national budget, which was recently passed in the House of Representatives and is now before the Senate, funding has been cut entirely for the USIP. Its total budget request ($46.5 million) had been approximately 0.008 percent of the Department of Defense's budget request.

It would have cost the average American 18 cents this year -- over the 26 years it's been operating, it has cost $2.58 per person.

Meanwhile, an amendment to the budget that proposed to de-fund the Army, Air Force and National Guard NASCAR racing teams was voted down 241-148. The U.S. military NASCAR sponsorships cost $7.4 million annually, with another $8 million on sponsorship-related events.

The intention behind the sponsorships is to increase recruitment. But the military has no way of measuring whether the sponsorships are at all effective -- in fact, the Marines discontinued their sponsorship of a NASCAR team in 2006, for that reason.

The effectiveness of the USIP is well-established, and has been specifically praised by General David Petraeus.

"In Iraq the Institute stepped up to the plate beginning in August, 2007, to assist … in a reconciliation effort in Mahmoudiya, a community on the southern edge of Baghdad that was once known as the 'Triangle of Death,'" he says, as quoted in the Wall Street Journal.

"USIP's experience working closely with the U.S. military will be a great asset in developing stronger unity of effort between civilian and military elements of government," says Petraeus.

According to a USIP fact sheet, their entire budget isn't enough to fund three hours of the Afghan war. If the work of the USIP shortens the war by three hours, it's saved us money.

Never mind the soldiers who don't have to die. Never mind the lives, and quality of life, for the people we're fighting. Never mind cutting short a war, and all the horror that comes with it, for just three hours. On a cold, pragmatic, miserly financial analysis, the USIP saves us money.

"A time of war is not a time to eliminate an institution that is training conflict managers in Iraq, Afghanistan and all over the world," Ambassador Samuel W. Lewis, Former President of USIP, said.

"America needs this nonpartisan center of international engagement which is positioning our country as a leader in making peace. Defunding it sends the entirely wrong signal."

A vote against it is a vote for war, for violence, for discord and for pain, not as a harsh necessity, but for its own sake, just to make more of it happen.

It's a vote to push the United States government to be an active force for suffering in the world. It's a vote to risk more American lives to kill more non-American human beings.

You can find out more about the United States Institute of Peace at:

http://www.usip.org/.

Opinion

One spot per car: Parking at NECC

Parking is difficult, but inconsiderate students make it even harder

By Harmonie Charland
Features Editor

Parking at each of the NECC campuses during the long winter months has been a challenge for students to say the least. Snow banks piled high taking up half the parking lot left for slim pickings when it came time to park your car.

In some instances there was just no parking and students were stuck sitting in their cars waiting in hope that someone would leave so an available space would open up.

Monday, March 21, was the first day of classes after a much needed week long vacation and also the first official day of spring.

Now we do live in New England, and only in New England would we get a mixture of snow, sleet, and rain on the first day of spring, but the good news is none of the snow accumulated and our parking lots where left snow bank free!

So with the absence of gigantic snow banks our parking problems should be in the past along with winter, right? Wrong!

Many students feel the need to take up two parking spaces as if their vehicle is of royalty and deserves extra space away from the other peasant vehicles in the parking lot.

Unless you are driving a Mack Truck to school every day and have no other choice but to take up more than one parking space you should follow this simple guideline: one vehicle per parking space.

"I always wonder why they do it. Are they trying to protect their cars or are they just bad drivers? Either way this is what causes parking problems on campus," stated NECC Journalism and Communications major Bardalis Gomez when asked of her opinion on the parking issue.

When I arrived to school today I saw three student vehicles taking up two parking spaces which is unnecessary and frankly just plain rude.

Let's do the math that's three vehicles taking up six parking spaces, that means three other students could have parked and made it to class on time like myself.

Nicholas Wright NECC Information Technology major has also noticed this ongoing problem in the parking lots. "Honestly I think people should be ticketed or something when they take up two parking spaces for no reason, it's not fair like who do they think they are?" said Wright.

Not being able to find parking on campus is annoying enough but when you see students deliberately limiting the amount of parking spaces that's something that can throw any student over the edge.

So let's all work on our campus parking etiquette and use one parking space per vehicle.

photo by Shah Rukh Khan

Pictured: this might be going slightly too far.

infodump

The Activist Arms Race: Why America needs moderates

By Thomas Shamma
Assistant Opinion Editor

Sometimes, it's hard to explain to people why activism is important. On a certain, abstract level, I think most people understand that some degree of involvement is a necessary mechanism for change in society. But to a lot of people, it seems unrealistic that anyone would need to have an actual job doing activist work.

Part of the reason for this is that a lot of people don't really know what activists do. They see the visibility stuff, pickets and rallies and all that, but (as will hopefully surprise no one) the parts of the job that aren't about getting a bunch of attention, well, don't really get a lot of attention.

But it's a bit more complicated than that, because another big reason that activism is, pragmatically speaking, necessary, is also a really big reason why it shouldn't be.

Because activists aren't all on the same side -- because the tea party is just as much an activist group as PETA or the NRA, and because an unavoidable fact of a pluralist society is that people don't always agree on things -- for the democracy to run fairly, every time one side hires another activist, the other side needs to hire one, too.

It's a bit like the Cold War. Nobody really thought having a bunch of nukes was helping. Given the choice, in isolation, Russia and the U.S. would both have probably preferred to spend that money on something else. But neither one could afford to risk falling behind, so we had an arms race. That's what's happened to activism in American politics.

This insight alone doesn't really solve anything. Being aware of an arms race doesn't make the problem go away -- if the NRA were to shut down tomorrow, gun control groups wouldn't say, "Well, we should probably close our doors too, to be sporting." If the Democratic party were to fold, the Republicans wouldn't call it quits, too, and give some third-party groups a turn.

Speaking broadly, what's necessary is supporting moderating forces. Campaign budget limits, increased transparency, and the ACLU are all effective ideas in that area.

They all help keep the whole 'politics' thing in its appropriate scale, so that most people, most of the time, can just get on with their lives, without having to worry that the government is going to outlaw their job/marriage/hobby if they're not constantly vigilant.

Right now, though, those securities aren't in place. So, right now, it's vital to be an activist for the things that are important to you.

And if you don't want to have to be a personal watchdog for everything you hold dear, if the idea of living in constant fear that some part of your lifestyle is under attack by some element of society (and for nearly everyone, some part usually is), you might want to look into dedicating some of that activist energy you'll have to be spending anyway into rebuilding our society's defenses against extremism.

The dilemma of the NECC Math Dept.

Inpsiring professors should be retained, overhaul needed

By Victoria Czaia
Correspondent

There is a dilemma at NECC that has been ignored for too long. The math department leaves much to be desired; it needs to be overhauled. The professors have been here for years, and many don't care whether the students understand what they are learning.

The horror stories about the math professors are abundant; professors will often pass students just to get rid of them. The department lacks a sense of stimulation and enthusiasm. Students dread each semester, and agonize over which professor's class they'll suffer through.

But as dark as it might seem, there are two sources of light: two professors who truly enjoy their work and nurture all their students in their academic careers. Robert Hawes, a wonderful and jovial adjunct professor, clearly enjoys his role. Professor Hawes was such an inspiration to one of his students, that student went on to become one of the most sought-after math professors at NECC. That professor's name is Justin Chase.

Chase is currently an adjunct professor in the math department. He is known for his passion for the subject and his unwavering dedication to his students.

Those who have had him in the past wait eagerly for his next class, and refuse to take classes with any other professor. New students taking his class are so inspired that many take even more math classes under his instruction.

High demand for this admired, caring, and passionate professor has boosted his courseload this semester from three to seven classes, all of which were heartbroken to learn that this would be his last semester at NECC.

Chase is leaving because the college will not hire him as a full-time professor.

Chase will stay on if offered a full-time position in the math department at NECC, and many students have pledged that if they can't take their math classes with Chase, they won't bother to finish their degrees.

All these students ask is that Professor Chase be hired full-time. Students are now starting to voice their opinions: "Out with the old, in with the new."

Petitions are circulating, online chats, blogs, and students are writing to senators and appealing to the governor for reform in the math department at NECC.

Letters have been written to President David Hartleb, incoming president Lane Glenn, and to the chair of the math department. At this point, none have been answered.

This shouldn't be a difficult decision for the administrators and trustees.

Let's keep the educators that have made a difference and brought out enthusiasm for a subject that has been dying for more than a century. Let's all hope that the voices of the students are heard.

Let's hope that the NECC math department's dilemma can finally be resolved.

We want to hear from you.

Send letters or opinion columns to the NECC Observer:

observer@necc.mass.edu

Include "Opinion Editor" in subject line.

News

Japan hit with record quake

After horrible disaster, nuclear crisis feared

By Andy Robinson
News Editor

Japan's massive earthquake and tsunami has gotten the eyes of every nation looking for ways to help those who suffered from the natural disasters. It has also sparked questions regarding nuclear power plants and radiation safety.

The earthquake that struck off the coast of Japan was the worst to hit in the country's history. At a 9.0 magnitude on the Richter scale, the earthquake is number four on the world's largest recorded earthquake in history (United States Geological Survey). The epicenter of the quake was just off the coast of Honshu, Japan, and the devastation of it was spread all over northern Japan by the massive tsunami caused.

As seen in countless videos online, the damage was massive. The tsunami took with it not only buildings, cars, homes, towns, etc., but also as many as 8,300 lives, The Guardian reports, and about 12,000 are missing. Over 500,000, according to BBC, are homeless. The numbers however continue to rise as people search out family and friends.

After an earthquake and tsunami, the latest in the continuing spiral of devastating events in Japan is the threat of a nuclear power plant explosion. The Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, located just under 200 miles from the epicenter of the quake, is under constant watch.

After a power failure caused by the quake and a resulting explosion at one of the reactors (six total), the station had no choice but to relieve the other reactors of the building pressure of hydrogen. To prevent another blast and the possibility of a larger explosion, the reactors had to release the hydrogen into the air which is now causing significant radiation in the surrounding areas.

Despite the efforts, fires and blasts inside the stations continue, setting back indications of progress.

In an effort to cool the reactors, about 18 tons of sea water was being helicoptered to the reactors.

In a press release from Tokyo Electric Power Company said that, "We measured radioactive materials (iodine etc.) inside of the nuclear power station area (outdoor) by a monitoring car and confirmed that radioactive materials level is getting higher than ordinary level."

In addition to the high levels of radioactive materials found, on March 20 and 21, TEPCO, "...detected cobalt, iodine and cesium from the seawater around discharge canal of Unit 1, 2, 3 and 4."

Evacuation was ordered for the surrounding 20km radius of the station due to the high nuclear threats.

On March 21, the International Atomic Energy Agency said in a press release that there was a white gas emission, an increase in radiation doses, and an evacuation of all plant employees. They were sent back the next day.

About 20 workers in the plant who were working to restore the station's power were injured by the release of gas or by the quake itself. Many were sent to Fukushima Medical University Hospital for treatment. The station continues working on restoring the power and stopping the exposure of nuclear radiation to the outside.

Relief by the United States is being orchestrated by various organizations and also by United States military already stationed in Japan.

The world watches and does what it can to help the people affected.

New NECC enrollment policy proposed

Continued from Page 1

"It was wrong," he said, referring to enrollment policies that may lead to high dropout rates. "It costs them money, costs them time, may cause them not to finish their education."

"This is the same everywhere," he added. "More than half of people who go to college do not finish. That's all colleges."

He went on to explain common dropout patterns.

"Most often it's [because] they weren't prepared for college."

"We are considering," he said, re-emphasizing that the proposal has not yet been implemented, "Implementing a registration deadline, [and] implementing having multiple start times."

"We already have courses that run the first eight weeks, courses that run the second eight weeks, and the [ones that] run the whole semester."

He suggested that they might consider instituting orientation sessions, which students would be required to attend. "Not because we want to punish people but because we want them to succeed," he explained.

"We're not trying to do this to disadvantage students," he said. "It's not enough just to let them in the door and hope they'll do well. ... That's where we are with that project."

"The important piece here that I don't think is coming off as clearly as it could is that this is a student success effort," he said. "Again, more than half of college students don't finish a degree. We want to change that."

"We cancel a lot fewer classes now than we ever have before," he said.

"[In 2007,] we were caneeling about 7 percent of classes, about 6 percent of students were affected by those cancellations. Spring 2007, 98 classes were cancelled. 450 students were affected."

Since that time, numbers have improved.

"[In Fall of 2010,] we only cancelled 42 classes. Only affected 149 students."

"Only 2 percent of the entire student population was affected by cancellations last semester," he said. "I'd like to see that at zero, obviously but it's a lot better than we used to do."

NECC student groups help clean up Hampton Beach

Clubs band together to help Surfrider Foundation

By Elisabeth Green
Staff Writer

Northern Essex students came together Saturday March 26, in a Surfrider trash cleanup, collecting e-colii infected disks at The Walll at Hampton Beach in New Hampshire.

The beach clean up was planned by Community Outreach Group but consisted of collective participation from members of the Students for a Democratic Society and Amnesty International, with eight students in total.

"We helped the Surfrider foundation clean up the beach, picked up debris and trash on the beach that had been left behind, " said student Nate Brudnick, the recently selected Vice President of COG.

This debris included discs from a Hookest, N.H., sewage facility used to collect bacteria from sewage water that were released from a sewage facility into the Merrimack River, ultimately being transported into the ocean and washing upon shorelines in New Hampshire and Massachusetts on March 12, according to the Eagle Tribune.

According to this article, these discs tested positive for e-coli and were said to likely contain other forms of harmful bacteria. As many as 9-10 million disks were said to be used at this facility and potentially released into the ocean.

President of SDS Steve Brown said the group helped in an effort that ultimately collected over 100 pounds of trash.

"It's pretty awesome, it's something we've been trying to take advantage of since it started last semester." COG President Katie Yameen said. "It's nice to see a combination of both a environmental and community outreach at hand to be involved with. Although the weather was a bit windy, the sun was out and it didn't stop the fun we had exploring the beach and spending time together working towards a good cause."

Students interested in participating in community efforts to support the community and create a cleaner environment can join the efforts of mobilized student groups on campus and contact the COG group that meets Monday at noon in C-107 or the SDS and Amnesty International chapters that meet Friday at noon in C-109.

COG is already looking ahead to their third Surfrider outreach next month. Saturday's event was the second Surfrider cleanup, and a third is scheduled in Salisbury for April 23. This event will take place from 1 a.m. to 1 p.m., meeting at the Surfing Bagel Company, and is followed by a beach party from 1 to 3 p.m. at the music hall near Salisbury beach. This information is available at the NH Surf Rider website : http://surfridernewhampshire.wordpress.com/.

Steven Brown Photo

Members of Community Outreach Group clean Hampton beach.

Security Log

With the help of Eagle Security, this security log has been compiled to inform students and staff about the incidents requiring assistance from Eagle Security on the Haverhill and Lawrence campuses. This log covers incidents between March 3, 2011 to March 21, 2011 .

March 7, 2011- A student fell on her head at about 5:25 p.m and an ambulance was called.

March 21, 2011- A student fell in E-building at about 9:00 a.m and an ambulance was called.

Campus Life

Bedroom affairs visit Top Notch

Curtain to be raised for spring production of Bedroom Farce

By Stephen Ndungu
Campus Life Editor

The NECC theater department will be presenting this spring theatrical play beginning the end of this week at the Top Notch Theater. The play "Bedroom Farce" a British comedy will open officially on Friday April 1, and have five other showings following that.

The play is produced and directed by an NECC professor and is performed by students. The actors are very excited about doing the play some of whom this is their first time acting.

"It's a formal comedy, it's quite funny," said Susan Sanders the coordinator. "It has tricky situations in it and also some physical comedy too, which is really good."

Sanders said the cast is comprised of only students and they don't have to be theater or performing arts majors. "We keep auditions closed to only NECC students, once in a while we call former students to act if one of the cast members drops out but we haven't had to do that with this play," Sanders said.

The assistant stage manager Maurice Petersen said the cast has come a long way to perfecting their characters. "They started out being rocky but I can say they have progressed in time, and they will put up a great show," Petersen said.

Stephen Ndungu Photo

Jeff Gould and Brooke Lavoie acting in their roles of an older couple on set of NECC's Top Notch Theater in Haverhill. The play opens Friday, April 1

The director called the cast members motivated and good to work with. "They are very vivacious and extremely hardworking," said Brianne Beatrice who also said that this was the first play she has ever directed at NECC.

Beatrice who is the one who suggested that they do "Bedroom Farce" said that the play is funny and electric. "This is the most fun I have ever had directing a play, this play is fun enough," Beatrice said.

"Bedroom Farce" is a British play by Alan Ayckbourn, it's a farce comparing and contrasting the difference between couples both young and old, and the different troubles they encounter, according to the NECC website.

The site also described the play to be taking place in three bedrooms during one night and the following morning. The cast consists of four married couples: Kate and Malcom are newlyweds, Jan and Nick have been married for a while, Trevor and Susannah are on the rocks, and Delia and Ernest just want a quiet evening, yet chaos ensues.

Those participating in the play said they are excited to attend and would love to see the other students come and enjoy the play together with them. "I hope everyone enjoys the play," said Rob Hewey, who plays Trevor. "I laughed immediately after reading the script," Hewey stated.

"I am excited to be helping with the play production, this is my third play at NECC," said Petersen who will be doing the lighting as well as assistant manager of the play.

Devin Parks, who plays Kate said she is excited but nervous at the same time. "My family will be here and I don't know what my little cousin will think of my character," Parks said.

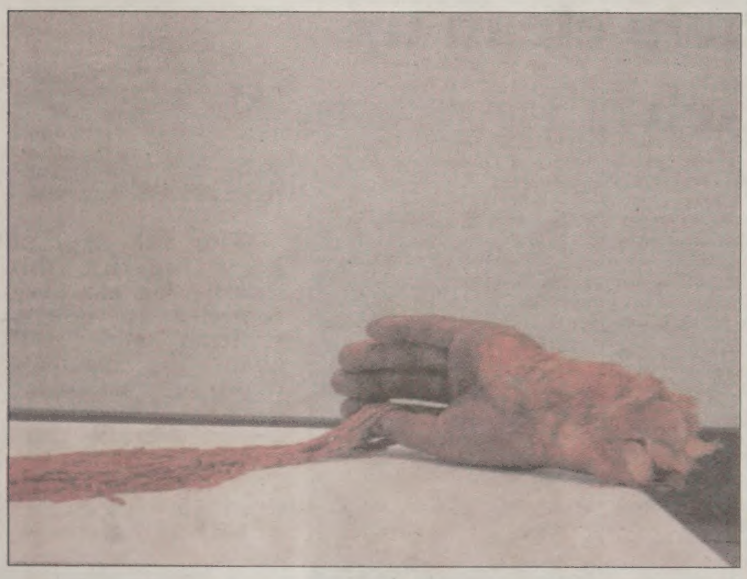
The play will open with a dress rehearsal for high school and some of the NECC clubs like the Gay Straight Alliance on Thursday March 31, then opens officially on April 1 at 7:30 p.m. the play will continue to show on April 2 and April 3 at the same time, followed by a showing April 7 at 4 p.m. the play will resume the 7:30 p.m. slot on the April 8 performance and close on April 9.

Admission will be $8 for students and seniors and $10 for general admissions.

Sanders said the theater department will aim to present a play in the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland in August of the coming year.

"It's a good opportunity for students, since the plays range from high school level to professional," said Sanders.

Unique art exhibit currently on display



Chantal McGovern Photo

The work of Juan Jose Barboza-Gubo, an art professor at Northern Essex Community College, is displayed in the ArtSpace Gallery, located in the Bentley Library on the college's Haverhill Campus, now through April 15.

The ArtSpace is open Mondays through Thursdays, 2 p.m. to 9 p.m., Friday, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

A resident of Jamaica Plain, Juan Jose Barboza-Gubo is a painter and sculptor originally from Peru. He has a bachelor's degree from Catholic University in Peru and two master's of fine arts degrees from MassArt where he taught for five years. His work has been shown in museums and galleries throughout the US, Peru, Japan, Italy, and Greece.

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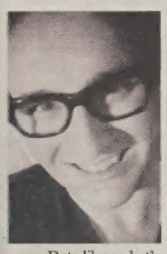
US News BEST COLLEGES

Arts and Entertainment

She never left: Britney's back

By Matthew Rand
A&E Editor



"The comeback of the year!" "The b***h is back!" "Better than ever!" Agreed, critics of America, agreed. Britney Spears is back. She's better than ever. But, like, what's this about comebacks? Haven't we been through this a thousand times? She went a little bit cray cray in 2007, I get that, but then she "came back" with "Blackout" and its subsequent hits "Gimme More," "Piece of Me," and "Break the Ice." And then she "came back" again in 2008 with "Circus" and its subsequent hits "Womanizer," title track "Circus," the controversial "If U Seek Amy," and club-banger "Radar." And then she "came back" in 2009 with "3." It went straight to #1. Just like "Womanizer." And now it's two years later: 2011. Her seventh album, "Femme Fatale" was just released yesterday.

Reviews have been astoundingly positive: Jody Rosen of Rolling Stone called it Spears' "best album," Britney herself "pop music's stealth avard-gardist." Adam Markovitz of Entertainment Weekly named the record a "confidently corrupt guide to a place where our only worry is whether the beats will end before the sun comes up." And yet the headlines still read of comebacks? Liberal Arts major at NECC, Maggie Griffin, agreed with yours truly: "I don't get it; she hasn't really left the music scene since [2007]! Isn't this like her third 'comeback'?" Her fourth, Maggie. Her fourth.

But who am I to complain about such matters? Brit's back with new jams for a new year and I couldn't be happier. Femme fatale, indeed! The album's an absolute knockout: a brazen masterpiece of the dance-dance-dance persuasion. Lead singles "Till the World Ends" and "Hold It Against Me" start things off, percolating beats and chanting choruses beckoning the audience to get up and shake it. "I can be the treble baby, you can be the bass," she cooes on "Big Fat Bass," a song produced by and featuring The Black Eyed Peas' will.i.am so seemingly pointless in nature (it's about a girl, non-surprisingly, who's obsessed with all things bumpin' and grindin', music-wise) but oh-so delectable to the ears.

Producers Darkchild, Stargate, Bloodshy & Avant, Benny Blanco, Rusko, Shellback and executives Dr. Luke and Max Martin serve Spears a platter of electronic delights so delicious, you'd be hardpressed to find a listener who didn't want to, at the very infinitesimal, least bob his or her head in rhythm along to songs like "I Wanna Go," "Inside Out," "Seal It With a Kiss," and "How I Roll," each (like the aforementioned "Big Fat Bass") on the surface simple-minded, but down deep achingly pleasing to the aural senses.

Well, I guess I either way I was destined to adore "Femme Fatale." I've been a loyal fanatic since age 8 and see no end to that said fanaticism in sight. I've been through the intense highs, intense lows, and back again with the self-proclaimed Miss American Dream since she, yes, was 17. You're like me? If you don't pick yourself up a copy, you have no soul. Ditto for the haters. What we've got here is a brash combination of the technologic and the pop, an insta-classic of the Britney oeuvre. "Keep on dancing till the world ends," she says. Sounds like a plan.

Courtesy Photo

Britney Spears in a promotional still from her seventh, newly-released album, "Femme Fatale."

We want to hear from you.

Send letters or opinion columns to the NECC Observer:

observer@necc.mass.edu

Include "Opinion Editor" in subject line.

Chris Brown versus F.A.M.E.

By Ally Doxsey
Correspondent

Two things usually come to mind when you hear the name Chris Brown: either a man with anger problems or a talented musician. Allowing your personal life to interfere with your career has its consequences, and we can see that through Chris Brown's fast rise to stardom. However, there is no denying that this man can hold a note or two. His latest album, "F.A.M.E," which was released on March 22 holds true to this statement.

The Kevin McCall produced track, "Deuces" featuring artist Tyga, starts the album off right, making "F.A.M.E" (an acronym for "Forgiving All My Enemies") an album about triumph, not tribulation. Moving on from past unfortunate events, Chris Brown takes his career to another level, amusing fans and his numerous haters alike.

The first few tracks, "Up to You" and "No BS" showcase Brown's familiar extraordinary vocal range allowing fans to reminisce on his gifted talents.

Although past albums have mostly focused on the soft and sweet side of Brown, F.A.M.E maintains that image while building upon another.

Cocky and confident, Chris Brown blows away the critics with his third single, "Look At Me Now". With the help of artists, Lil' Wayne and Busta Rhymes, Brown is easily able to solidify his spot in the music world. Listeners get a taste of his rap persona, C. Breezy, while Lil' Wayne and Busta Rhymes shovel a hand full of lyrics down your throat. F.A.M.E does an excellent job withstanding Brown's reputation.

Through the balance of heart-felt and dance groove tracks, the album reassures the public that the quality of music will always prevail.

Recruiting artists such as, Wiz Khalifa, Ludacris, and Game, and producers Timbaland and Polow Da Don assists in producing club hits and feel good records.

"Beautiful People" featuring Benny Benassi is a very powerful track that results in an overwhelming feeling of happiness. Spirits are uplifted through the song's pulsing synths and positive lyrics.

"The beauty is inside you, don't let them bring you down," Brown sings. It is an electro house song that incorporates elements of europop, a new direction for Brown's music.

F.A.M.E inspires people to express themselves through the art of music. The album reminds people of the good times, not the bad. Even if your opinion on Chris Brown as a person continues to sway, the opinion on his music is definitely concrete.

Courtesy Photo

Convention thrills

By Mike Litman
Correspondent

The Boston Convention Center held the largest Penny Arcade Expo ever held, holding 65,000 gamers under one roof (currently a record for the biggest convention that Penny Arcade has ever held). This only being the second PAX East held, many people were amazed it already surpassed the attendance of the Penny Arcade main event, PAX Prime in Seattle, Wash.

E3, Game Developer Convention, PAX Prime, and even Comic-Con hold different news that pertain to different games. PAX is one of the most consumer friendly conventions available today, while others only allow members of companies and the press. "PAX was the most amazing time," said Chris Donahue, a student at NECC. "Hot girls, new video games, and free gifts. It was nothing like I've ever seen before. I can't wait to go again."

Shortly after PAX was over, it was announced that PAX 2010 is to be held in early April. "I'm so bummed that I missed it this year," said Jeff King, a student at Salem State. "I can't wait to go next year."

Some companies that were involved in Penny Arcade this year include 2K Games, Gearbox, Behemoth, Capcom, Bethesda, Nintendo, Sony Entertainment and much more. And for those who missed some game releases this year they included. Duke Nukem: Forever, L.A. Noir, The Darkness 2, Star Wars: The Old Republic, Hunted: The Demon Forge, Brink, Portal 2, and many more.

Table top games were another big component of PAX. They included things such as Magic: The Gathering, World of Warcraft: Trading Card Game, Dungeons and Dragons, and Warhammer among others.

Although there are many different conventions occurring throughout the year, it's safe to say that Penny Arcade is in a position to hold a lot of developers and news about upcoming games. Who knows, maybe Penny Arcade will change the venue like they did last year, or make more room for more companies. All I can say is PAX is bringing a positive impact to the east coast and many people are excited.

Mike Litman Photo

Characters from familiar games, in full costume, were on hand to greet attendees at PAX.

Features

What happened to Myspace?

Harmonie Charland
Features Editor

Before we were updating our status on Facebook, Myspace was the number one social networking site in the country.

Since Mark Zuckerberg created the popular and universally used social Networking site Facebook, Myspace seems to have taken a seat on the back burner and remained there, or has it?

Over the years Myspace has made significant changes in its image and all around purpose. What was once a site similar to Facebook used primarily for uploading pictures, staying connected with friends, and personal profile pages, Myspace is now a leading social entertainment website.

According to Myspace.com, "Myspace drives social interaction by providing a highly personalized experience around entertainment and connecting people to the music, celebrities, TV, movies, and games that they love."

Similar to Facebook Myspace is available through a variety of platforms including online, personal mobile devices, as well as offline events such as Myspace sponsored concerts.

One of Myspace's most recent and successful ventures is Myspace Music. Myspace Music joined forces with three of the largest music companies Universal, Sony BMG, and Warner Music. According to Neilsen Soundscan these three music companies along with Myspace social network "account for 77% of all U.S. album sales".

Myspace Music enables users to listen to any song for free on the site. Users simply visit the pages of major label artists such as Drake or Jay Z, click on the song they would like to listen to and enjoy. Users are also provided the opportunity to create their own personal playlists on their page made up of their favorite artist songs.

If Myspace users want to purchase a particular song, Myspace offers the opportunity to do so with the click of a button. Once the song has been purchased it is immediately routed to iTunes or Windows Media Player via a download service created by Amazon.

Myspace has taken one step further into the music industry teaming up with Interscope records to create Myspace Records.

Myspace users who are also aspiring musicians are able to upload their music to the site for other Myspace users to listen to. Myspace Records' goal is to sign and produce a few albums a year from aspiring artist and bands discovered on the site.

Myspace also uses their influence to promote change worldwide with the their Myspace "Hijack" program, which is designed to provide celebrity influencers with control of the entire site to encourage the entire global Myspace audience to participate in a singular event.

Earlier this month Victoria Secret super model Miranda Kerr was announced as the Myspace Celebrity "Hijack" and global ambassador in honor of Earth Hour a once a year event that promotes the conservation and wellbeing of our planet. Kerr stated in a recent Myspace press release she was "excited to be in a position to reach out to the Myspace audience for such an important cause. It will be fun to share the things I love with such a huge global community."

With a new focus and image Myspace has found a way to stay relevant in the cyber world even with competition from online sites like Facebook and Twitter.

The Myspace website has a fresh new design which is inviting and a great place for anyone with an interest in music and entertainment. Myspace is free to join and you can create a profile at any time.

Stock up

Five everyday items that you never want to run out of

By Harmonie Charland
Features Editor

There's nothing worse than running out of something that you absolutely need. This tends to happen at the worst possible time which usually adds to the amount of aggravation you are already experiencing.

What makes this element of aggravation even more unbearable is that these things have made their way on to a to-do list that you conveniently seem to forget on the kitchen counter. In an effort to keep these not so pleasant moments on the humorous side here is a list of the five worst things to run out of and why:

1. Toilet Paper: Picture this, you're sitting on the "throne" and it's a number two, you finished doing your business and reach for the toilet paper only to find an empty roll. There are various ways to get out of this unfortunate predicament, spare napkins or a box of Kleenex may do the trick. This must be the most aggravating circumstance to find yourself in especially when it's due to the fact that you simply forgot to grab a roll of toilet paper while you were out. This is one of those times where if you could physically kick yourself in the butt you would, no pun intended of course!

2. Toothpaste: Personal hygiene may be one of the most important things to a person unless funky body odor is something you enjoy having. You used your last squirt of toothpaste and vowed that before you went home that night you would stop at the drugstore to buy a new tube. Of course the next morning comes around and you have forgotten your vow to get toothpaste.

There's no way to avoid the dragon breath, you're stuck running to the store with breath that could kill a patch of daisy's.

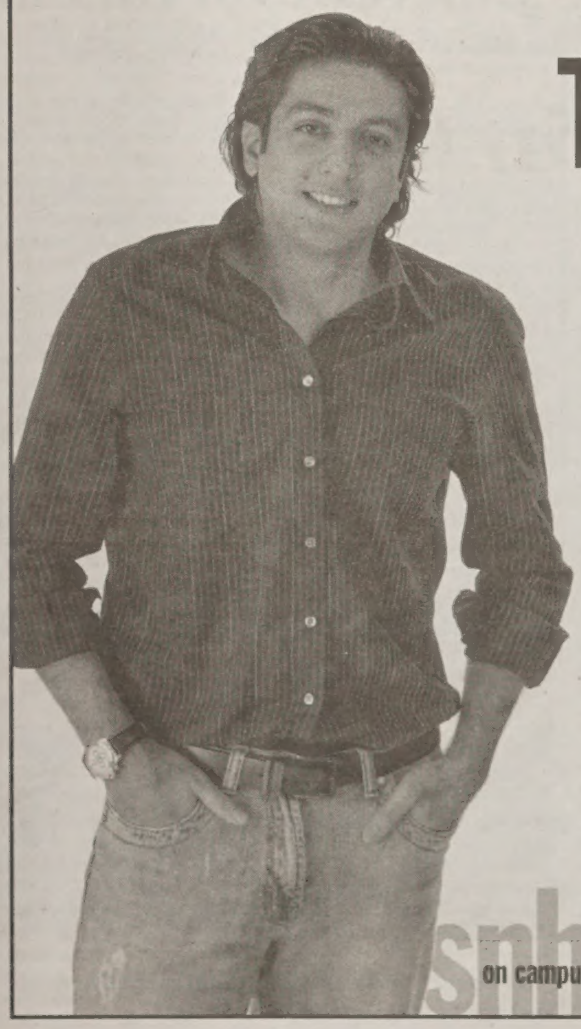
3. Gas: How we can forget to put gasoline in our vehicles I will never understand, but truth is it happens. Two years ago a friend and I took a road trip to Belfast, Maine. Everything was going smooth we had the radio bumping, windows down, enjoying the ride. Before we knew it we were stranded on the side of the road with nothing but trees surrounding us.

To make this situation even more awesome neither of our cellphones had service, talk about a real FML moment! Moral of the story? Watch your gas meter because I promise you it won't watch itself!

4. Money: Running out of money may be the absolute worst case of an absent mind. Before there were debit cards people wrote checks and balanced a check book. With the rise in technology comes the decline in self-sufficient knowhow.

You're at the mall swiping your debit card like a bad habit until you hit that one cash register and receive the infamous "I'm sorry but your card was declined." Talk about embarrassing, its moments like these that make you wish you could crawl under a rock and hide.

5. Laundry Detergent: Your dirty laundry is overflowing and the lingering odor is unbearable. Your dresser drawers are completely empty and you are fresh out of underwear. It's moments like these we find ourselves wishing mommy still did our laundry.



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Sports

NECC baseball spring trip

The Knights went to Maryland for a tournament

By Mike Hickey
Correspondent

The Northern Essex Community College Knights baseball team kicked off their spring break with a trip down to Maryland to test their skills against some out of area opponents. The Knights went down with great intentions to see what they could do against some new opponents.

They started their trip off a little slow scoring only two runs in back to back games against Frederick Community College. Putting their offensive woes behind them, the Knights put up 15 runs in a barnburner 16-15 loss to Herkimer Community College. The Knight's 15 run outburst was led by the Roman brothers Ray and Anyelo. The brothers combined for seven hits, six runs, and four RBIs in the near win.

With the team back in the swing of things they avenged one of their two losses to Frederick by shutting them out 7-0. The Knights put together a great mix of hitting and pitching. Pitcher Mike Chartier pitched seven shutout innings stringing together five strikeouts in the NECC win.

The following day the Knights put their sights on bringing down Baltimore City Community College. With great, well-rounded hitting and the pitching doing its job, NECC came out with the 10-7 victory. Eight out of the nine Northern Essex players in the lineup had a hit on the day. With a record of 2-3 the Knights tried to pull up to .500 by taking out Anne Arundel Community College. The Northern Essex pitching staff gave up only one earned run in seven innings, halting the Anne Arundel offense with a 5-3 win.

On the final day of the trip NECC put their .500 record on the line in back to back games against CCRI. The game stayed even until the 5th when CCRI put up three and made the score 5-2. The score held there until the end and NECC was downed 5-2. On the same day the Knights took the field against the same CCRI team in a close game that was only decided by one run. CCRI defeated the Knights with a go ahead run in the 3rd inning, holding on 3-2.

Now that the Knights are back in town, the team has 10 upcoming meetings with other teams before their first home game Thursday, April 7 against Roxbury Community College. With a few games under their belts now look for the Knights to hit their stride against their upcoming competition.

Knights compete in Bridgewater meet

Standout performace for track athletes in early season meet

By Anthony Bevilacqua
Sports Editor

The Northern Essex Community College Knights' track and field team recently had a meet at Bridgewater State. Both the men and women's teams were represented well at the meet.

Two athletes had standout performances at the tournament for the NECC Knights' track and field team. For the women's team Noelia Figuereo placed 2nd in the 100-meter dash and 3rd in the 200-meter dash. Figuereo is the returning national champion in the 200 meter and runner up in the 100 meter. She is expected to have a great season ahead of her.

First year student Chris Dow had a solid performance for the Knights men's team. Dow finished 11th in the 100-meter dash. He finished with a time of 11.92 seconds just .84 seconds shy of the school record. This was a great start for the young athlete and more is expected of him in the future.

The NECC Knights track and field team will continue to practice and have meets throughout the rest of the spring season.

Here are the rest of the stats from the Bridgewater Meet:

Women's Track & Field Notes:

Noelia Figuereo ran a 12.66 in the 100M Dash and came in 2nd out of 22 athletes. She also ran a 27.12 in the 200M Dash and came in 3rd out of 33 athletes.

Giselle Munoz ran a 29.86 in the 200M Dash and came in 16th out of 33 athletes. She also ran a 1:09.00 (69 seconds) in the 400M Dash and came in 12th out of 15 athletes.

Erin Baker ran a 2:57.65 in the 800M Run and came in 18th out of 21 athletes. She also ran a 5:54.97 in the 1500M Run and came in 23rd out of 25 athletes.

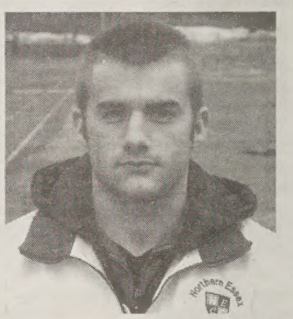
Tonya Allen ran a 3:16.55 in the 800M Run and came in 21st out of 21 athletes. She also ran a 6:35.33 in the 1500M Dash and came in 25th out of 25 athletes.

Men's Track & Field Notes:

Christopher Dow ran a 11.92 in the 100M Dash and came in 11th place out of 34 athletes. He also ran a 24.79 in the 200M Dash and came in 21st place out of 41 athletes.

Brandon Doyle ran a 58.33 in the 400M Dash and came in 27th out of 32 athletes. He also ran a 2:18.55 in the 800M Run and came in 22nd place out of 25 athletes.

Luis Rozon ran a 2:20.29 in the 800M Run and came in 23rd out of 25 athletes. He also ran a 4:47.13 in the 1500M Dash and came in 35th out of 39 athletes.



Courtesy photo

NECC track and field athlete Chris Dow

Courtesy photo

NECC track and field athlete Noelia Figuereo

Bulls take charge in the East

Rose and company have their eyes on becoming best in the NBA by season's end

By Anthony Bevilacqua
Sports Editor

The Chicago Bulls have put on a dazzling performance during the 2010-2011 NBA season. Hard work, tough defense, and a star point guard in Derrick Rose has put the Bulls on top of the Eastern Conference and eyeing to be the best team in the NBA.

As of this weekend the Bulls are just three games behind the San Antonio Spurs for the best record in the NBA. San Antonio has held the number one spot for almost the entire season. The Bulls are looking to dethrone the Spurs in the closing weeks of the 2010-2011 season. Bulls shooting guard Ronnie Brewer told ESPN reporters, "We're trying to go out there and get the Spurs." With the Spurs star forward Tim Duncan out with an injury this is a very realistic goal for the Bulls.

It was not too long ago that no one was talking about Chicago as a powerhouse team. Soon after the NBA's trade deadline on February 24 the Bulls pulled ahead of the Boston Celtics as the number one team in the Eastern Conference. The Celtics slipped-up after making numerous trades right before the deadline. These trades resulted in some bad team chemistry for the Celtics. The Bulls took advantage of Boston's chemistry problems and now have a two game lead on the Celtics in the East. NECC student Ryan Jennings said, "The Bulls are the scariest team in the NBA right now."

The Bulls know that they need to keep working hard to stay in the position they are in. The lead they have in the East is not big enough that they can coast for the rest of the season. Brewer said to reporters, "We're trying to win as many games as we possibly can because we know it's a tough race in the East." He is right, with the Celtics at two games back and the Heat at two games back Chicago has little breathing room.

After last season no one thought that the Bulls would be in the position they are in. The Bulls finished the 2009-2010 with a record of 41-41 placing them 8th in the Eastern Conference. They barely made the playoffs and were presented with an early exit by the Cleveland Cavaliers. This season the Bulls currently have a 53-19 record with only a few weeks left before the playoffs. They owe this incredible turnaround to a big offseason for them.

During the summer months the Bulls were able to acquire power forward Carlos Boozer from the Utah Jazz. Boozer is known for getting injured but his strong offense has helped propel Chicago forward this season. Chicago has also been able to rely on their young center Joakim Noah. Noah has shown a lot of growth over his few years in the NBA and has really let it flourish this season.

The one player that can be credited the most with Chicago's great playing this season is superstar point guard Derrick Rose. Rose has done everything shy of growing wings this season for the Bulls.

After last season every NBA analyst was on Rose's back about his poor shooting ability.

> "Derrick Rose should definitely get MVP
>
> – Chris Dow

He was able to drive and dunk but was weak from the outside. Rose spent the entire offseason working on his jump shot and 3-point shooting. He came back this season with a spectacular all-around game.

"He's only improving; he's a young guy, he's very humble and he's willing to work hard every day. And I think guys feed off of that and just try to match his intensity and try to match his work ethic," said teammate Ronnie Brewer to ESPN.

Rose is averaging 24.9 points per game and 7.9 assists per game. These stats have put him on top of the list for NBA MVP talk. People and players are placing him above former MVPs Kobe Bryant and LeBron James for this season. NECC student Chris Dow said, "Derrick Rose should definitely get MVP."

Even former Chicago Bull legend and NBA hall-of-famer Michael Jordan has picked Rose for his 2010-2011 NBA MVP.

There is almost nothing this team can't do right now. "They [the Bulls] are a hardworking team; very explosive and good defense in general," said NECC student Ryan Jennings. With the help of Rose they managed to win games while Boozer and Noah were out with injuries.

"They have a good shot at making it to the championship this year," said NECC student Chris Dow. At the top of the East and closing in on the Spurs for best in the NBA the Bulls should make the final weeks of the season very interesting.

Love, Lust and Relationships

CREEP ALERT! Bad pick up lines

By Chantal McGovern
Executive Editor

Occasionally, while engaging in an ordinary activity such as purchasing whitening toothpaste at your local pharmacy, a member of the opposite sex may approach you as they are looking for a potiental mate.

In our imagination, they would be an Armie Hammer look-a-like, get our sense of humor, make us giggle and will be purchasing Axe's "Dark Temptation" deodorant.

They would be polite, hold the door and offer purchase an hot caffeinated beverage for us.

In reality, this person more than likely resides in their mother's basement, and their pallid complexion lets you know that they haven't seen sunlight for the past three years.

Then, they will continue to sniff your hair when you glance in the opposite direction,after you repeatedly tell them to stop as they are purchasing two bottles of Beano.

They will allow the door to smack you in the face. Then use one of the worst pick up lines you've ever heard in the entirety of your existence. A feeble attempt to take you home to Mom's musty basement.

However, these shameful pick up lines rarely work. Well, if you have any sense of self worth anyways. But, one thing they succeed in doing is making us chuckle at their hilarity.

Thus, here are just a few pick up lines, along with the appropriate response that should accompany these lame attempts at "winning us over," many, which have been thrown around the populace at NECC.

1) Baby can you be my Corona and lime, and I can be your main squeeze.

Essentially this means they want to grope you for lingering amounts of time.

Specifically, after you have consumed enough alcohol to get the any number of reality television stars buzzed.

Thus, it would be reasonable to use a sentence using any of the following word: ***hole, jerk, [expletive deleted], [expletive deleted] and [expletive deleted].

Hopefully, they will get the point, if not it is reasonable to resort to hiding under a table.

2) Let's make out in the half hour before I go to my class. Just make sure that you don't fall in love with me.

Judging by the intellect of this individual, you should be fairly certain they have never kissed anyone.

Except various inanimate objects including but not limited to: their left hand, their right hand, a lamp post, another lamp post because the first rejected them, a pillow, a vacuum cleaner (which should now be discarded) and last but not least a sedated canine.

Thus, it would be perfectly acceptable to laugh in their face. Although, even this they will not take that as an insult. Seeing as this person has no manners they are destined to eventually go to jail for various harassment charges.

Back away from this individual slowly and then run away before they take you into their twig-like arms and start licking your face,

3) Hello. Are you taking any applications for a boy/girlfriend?

It is reasonable to question whether a person is sane if they are asking you this question. Simply state you are taking applications.

But, that the one requirement is that all applicants must be able to function in society, which they obviously cannot do.

After this is you may need to change your name and move to a different state.

4) You're so hot you melt the plastic in my underwear.

This line is a classic for some reason. Honestly, some nerd used it on an girl, who thought it was cute and people still think it works.

Obviously, if you have any standards this line will not work. Simply tell them that you are sorry that their mother never properly potty trained them. Try to say this without laughing.

5) Do you work for UPS ? I could have sworn I saw you checking out my package.

Courtesy Photo

Here is one such woman, who knows how to respond to a lame attempt at a pick up line.

Any person who uses this line, for lack of a better term is just a bit cocky and probably resembles the Situation from "The Jersey Shore." They believe they're slick, but the only thing that is slick is their greasy hair and coppery baby oil covered "Six pack."

A normal reaction would be to splash a hot caffeinated beverage in their face. However, for this you need to hit them where it hurts.

Their ego. Thus, choose a quick cynical reply such as: "I was only checking out your package because it appears to be damaged."

Then, go the nearest restroom and santize your hands the best you can. It is okay to vomit too.

Goodbye

A column with feeling

By Harmonie Charland
Features Editor

Hello readers. I did something a bit different this issue and wrote a poem of an experience I had.. It's about a lustful relationship I built with someone who I knew from the start was no good for me. I believe not every relationship we build with another is meant to be love.

We contemplated our GOODBYE the moment we said hi. This situation YOU and I, is not and never will be REAL.

A brief encounter of LUST that must never turn to LOVE is what we shared. Circumstances such as ours,sole purpose is to add to life's MYSTERIES.

Time we spent, laughs we had, kisses we shared all for the formation of what if?

What if we ALLOWED love to form? What if WE crossed paths at a different time? What if we made a MISTAKE? Some questions are better left UNANSWERED, Feelings won't be HURT because we denied the proper amount of TIME to allow them to form.

Were our moments of no IMPORTANCE? No because every encounter has a purpose.

We both will walk away with a better UNDERSTANDING of ourselves. Situations such as ours work out BEST when decisions are made in a timely fashion.

If too much time is DEVOTED to a fictional existence such as ours HEARTBREAK will occur.

But if goodbye is said at just the right time we are allowed the JOYFUL memory of what we NEVER really had and the MYSTERY of what could have been.

You will be in my THOUGHTS and I in yours…goodbye.

Horoscopes

By Lasha Seniuk (MCT)

ARIES (March 21-April 20) - Someone close may now need to discuss recent misunderstandings or cancelled family plans. Offer a clear description of your feelings and watch for fast decisions.

In the coming weeks successful relationships will be expressive and openly affectionate. After mid-week some Aries natives may encounter an unexpected job offer or financial proposal.

Wait, however, for added information. Private disagreements or minor legal issues may prove bothersome. Be patient.

TAURUS (April 21-May 20) - Recently reserved officials may this week boldly express their opinions. Workplace habits, employee communications or leadership duties may be on the agenda.

Closely follow all new instructions. Attentiveness and respect for authority are now vital. Friends, lovers and close relatives will, after Thursday, push for greater involvement in private decisions or delicate family issues.

All will work to your advantage. Pace yourself and watch for clear emotional signals.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21) - Older relatives or long-term friends will this week require delicate financial advice. Business disruptions, changing income sources or new job offers may soon cause concern. Fast progress will be unavoidable.

Encourage loved ones to research all new options. Later this week a past friend or lover may propose an unusual social alliance or home event.

Private celebrations or rare family discussions are highlighted. Passions will be high: go slow and ask probing questions.

CANCER (June 22-July 22) Loved ones may this week offer bold suggestions. Social and romantic communications are now due to increase. After Tuesday expect friends and romantic partners to ask for firm commitments, provide detailed opinions or outline new emotional goals. Listen closely: emotional ideals are now changing. Later this week a past financial mistake may reappear. If so, thoroughly verify all documents and calculations. Authority figures will soon press for completed projects. Stay active.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) Image: On shore, a deep-sea diver checking his equipment Message: Safe exploration Social innuendo and romantic speculation are compelling this week. Surprising information concerning new friends may now initiate intense gossip. Enjoy light-hearted group involvement but avoid probing for personal details. Privacy will soon be an ongoing concern. After Thursday powerful ideas, dreams or flashes of wisdom will provide unique insight. Areas affected are creative home solutions, family dynamics and long-term romantic goals. Remain determined.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Friends or colleagues may now adopt a renewed attitude of group involvement. Before next week social enthusiasm will be high. Encourage all such expansion and watch for vital changes in temperament, romantic confidence and self-awareness. Some Virgos may also encounter an unusual workplace introduction. If so, don't hold back: new friendships will quickly expand. After Saturday rest and pamper the body: physical and emotional energy may be temporarily low.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) Artistic interest and private creativity are now on the rise. Some Librans will soon begin an almost nine week phase of revised leisure activities, fresh social outlets or exotic educational pursuits. Don't hold back. Revitalized curiosity is healthy and will soon build confidence. Wednesday through Saturday accents discussions with family members or older colleagues. Key issues may involve changing money habits, spending patterns or large purchases. All is well. Stay focused.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) Insights and sudden hunches may be revealing over the next six days. Some Scorpios will soon be offered a powerful glimpse into their own romantic future. Areas affected are repeated family patterns, reversed social loyalties and shared home or financial goals between friends. After Thursday watch for a complex social invitation or business proposal. A colleague or friend may outline rare property agreements or investments. Remain cautious: new information is needed.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) Business proposals, although controversial, may soon bring remarkable opportunities. Before mid-week group investments, long-term financial planning or complex legal agreements are highlighted. Remain quietly dedicated. Patient reflection and timed decisions will be the key to lasting success. Later this week friends and relatives will be introspective or moody. Take none of it personally. Loved ones may now need extra time to process recent social or family events.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 20) Written documents and financial partnerships are accented over the next few days. Property agreements, leases and large purchases will soon captivate the time and attention of loved ones. Offer detailed suggestions and reliable practical advice: your words and ideas will be closely studied. Wednesday through Saturday minor romantic discussions may quickly escalate. Key issues involve changing home or family priorities. Stay focused: passions may be unpredictable.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21-Feb. 19) Love relationships will this week begin a passionate stage of growth and renewed intimacy. Previously reluctant or distant romantic partners may soon ask for greater emotional involvement in your life. Several months of inward thought, family conflict and social doubt are now ending. Don't look back. Later this week study the minor hints or suggestions of bosses or managers. New business ideas and changing workplace policies will soon be announced. Go slow.

PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20) Large purchases, property contracts and legal documents may require careful consideration over the next few days. Written promises or financial adjustments will eventually work in your favor. At present, however, confusing numbers may be problematic. Stay focused on short-term gains and all will be well. After Saturday a new romantic proposal or social invitations will trigger gossip, minor discussions and doubt. Group events may be temporarily disrupted: remain quietly distant.

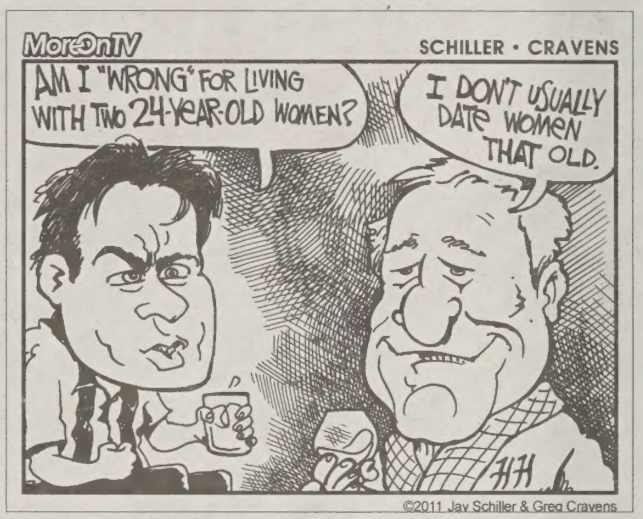
If your birthday is this week...the coming few months will usher in complex social and family changes. Long-term friends and relatives will need extra approval for their home plans or proposals.

Emotional reactions may be intense: expect loved ones to be mildly possessive of your loyalty. Almost two years of vague social or romantic commitments will fade before mid-June. After July a powerful era of romantic fulfillment arrives.

Love relationships will change the nature of your daily commitments and family goals.

Stay focused and respond quickly to all serious decisions from loved ones. Later in October business and financial relationships may also be affected: watch for unusual or highly creative proposals.

The Funnies



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"... And how are you enjoying the cheapest bottle of wine on the menu?"

NECC

ABSURDER

Alien Parasite?
Dark gods wonder: is spleen alien lifeform?

Racing for an A
Automotive Acceleration Studies approved!

Want a baby?
Listen to these songs and have one in 9 months

The False Newspaper of Northern Essex Community College, Haverhill and Lawrence, Mass. • HAPPY APRIL FOOL'S DAY

2011 Graduation Speaker

By Chanteal Bullafarht
Awesome Supreme Executive Editor in Chief of not factual information and media

NECC recently has announced that reality TV star, tanning addict and the not-so-brilliant author, Nicole Polizzi will be the featured speaker at the 2011 commencement ceremony on May 21.

Polizzi, known by today's urban youth as "Snooki" is best known for her work on the overnight sensation "The Jersey Shore."

"Yeah" says the Situation, close friend and confidant of Snooki, while caressing his six-pack.

"She definitely isn't a grenade, you know what I'm saying. I totally would love to be creeping on that."

The Situation, then pouted and cupped his chin with one hand as though he was thinking so hard that his head was going to explode.

"You know she is the best dirty little hamster I know." The Situation then raised his eyebrows and said, "You know what I mean?"

According to several individuals Snooki will be the best and coolest person ever to speak at commencement.

"Snooki is my hero, she totally trumps Chuck Norris and she is less dumber than my parkeet or like any other bird like anywhere else on the planet right now," says student Ben Bennigan, NECC nuclear garbage disposal major.

MCT Campus photo

Behold the guest commencement speaker for the class of 2011, Nicole Polizzi.

Not only has Snooki been a great source of fashion for classy women across the country, but she is a bestselling author.

"She has one of the best books ever!" Says Pauly D, costar of Snooki on "The Jersey Shore," "I would totally like actually read her book if I actually could read. But I'm too busy with my daily ritual GTL."

According to NECC President, Drew Hurtleg, Snooki will be the finest speaker this school has ever seen.

"I mean honestly is there anyone more successful, with a better accent?" Hurtleg said. "Plus, she can tell people what not to do in life. For example, Snooki can tell people don't ride a bicycle on the beach after you had too many fruity drinks. Who can give better advice? Donald Trump? I don't think soooooooo."

Incoming president secretly a fish

Is incoming president a fish or is this just an untrue article?

By Poisson d'Avril
Ichthyology Editor

Investigations into the background of incoming president Lynee Globb have revealed shocking personal details which had been concealed during his professional career. Beneath his congenial, well-dressed exterior, his warm smile and firm handshake, lurks a dark, scaly secret.

Anonymous sources in an Alaskan pond have come forward, revealing that in 2002, Globb purchased online an elaborate piece of machinery from a biotech lab in North Dakota, which they claim has allowed him to survive, and control his machine body, from a fishbowl in the skull.

"He's changed a lot since he was young," said the source. "I remember when he was just a little goldfish."

Other sources have described Globb as "Sharklike," saying "He's been trying to move up the food chain since he was young, but I never thought he'd get this far."

MCT Campus Photo

Is this the face of the future president of NECC?

According to sources, Globb moved from theater to academics as an effort to escape his past, having been active in the saltwater interpretive dance scene in his youth.

Globb refused to comment on the subject, citing a busy schedule and, in what sounded like a slip of the tongue, thirst.

More investigation to follow.

Anarchy consumes Haverhill campus

By Dean Richards & Xanthias Watson
Wartime Correspondents

Student riots continue as the security guard strike shows no sign of abating. NECC's security force refused to report for duty beginning March 28, 2011, and anarchy has consumed the Haverhill campus in their absence. In the face of Armageddon President Lungarm has refused to close the school leaving professors to brave overturned cars and out of control fires.

"I don't know what to do," said Professor Andrew Dashendotz. "There's so much violence and destruction, but the students keep showing up. I can't just abandon my classes."

Local police have been largely absent. In a press conference, a representative was quoted as saying, "Oh, you know college kids. We try not to get too involved."

Vice President Avenue Glade, who has barricaded himself in his office with a carton of cigarettes and a shotgun, commented on the mayhem,

"This is the exact reason I wanted to change the enrollment deadline!" he said, "This never would have happened if enrollment closed two weeks prior to classes beginning." He cited the complex sociology in his proposal, insisting that the students who enrolled earlier were far more likely to successfully ward off a violent attack by campus employees.

Circumstances have degraded radically since the beginning of the security strike two days ago. Hit and run accidents have skyrocketed as pedestrians struggle to cross the street from the parking lots to the campus buildings. The unattended wounded must crawl desperately to escape further injury, while navigating the clots of smoking students.

Smoking on campus has exploded to the point that massive bonfires have formed in the common area between the E and C buildings. The smell of nicotine and dry brush fills the air as acrid smoke billows into the sky.

Shuttle passes that were once safeguarded by security have become the new currency on campus, as legal tender no longer holds value. Powerful "shuttle lords," as they call themselves, have taken control of the shuttle pass supply and trade the slips for resources and services.

"We own this school," said Anthony Drinkwater, the most prominent shuttle lord, "We have women, weapons, and ready transportation to all of NECC's three convenient campus locations."

The Physical Education majors have barricaded the Student Activities building, the Theater majors have formed a pirate band as dangerous as they are talented, the philosophy majors have, for the past four days, been discussing the relative merits of establishing a Hegelian utopia, and the Nutrition majors have stressed the importance of a balanced breakfast.

"It's really important," says an anonymous nutritionist. "You need to start your day off right."

Not everyone has taken advantage of the chaos; some students have taken a stand for order, civilization and academia.

"The shuttle lords are savage brutes that will feel the sting of justice," said the mysterious vigilante J.D., who agreed to be interviewed in a dark room, shrouded with shadows. "The gangs, the smokers, the violent lunch workers, they may have the student body afraid. But there's something they're afraid of, too."

When asked what, he said in a deep raspy voice, "Me."

Following a short lapse in attention, J.D. disappeared, leaving no trace but an open window in the far corner of the room.

Opposed to the tyranny of the shuttle lords is the New Northern Essex Alliance (NNEA) headquartered in the TC building. A violent conflict is sure to erupt when the two sides eventually clash.

One student who has chosen to stay home during the mayhem said, "The school is still open? What the f*** is that all about?"

Disclaimer: NONE of the above stories are true. This production was brought to you by the genius talented minds of The Observer Staff. We would like to say in the words of Sheldon Cooper, Bazinga!